RINGVORLESUNG

Dienstag, 23. November 2021, 14:15 Uhr c.t.

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Reconsidering the History of Archaeology in the Age of Empire

It has now been 25 years since I published my first inquiry into the history of archaeology (Down from Olympus; Princeton, 1996). Since that time, the history of archaeology has become a very lively field, one for which the sketching of imperial and post-imperial contexts is now crucial. I did, myself, emphasize this context in Down from Olympus and other subsequent essays on related subjects. But as a perpetual contrarian, I would like to ask if this focus has blinded us to other aspects of this history that might profitably be pursued, and indeed are being pursued by some recent contributors to the debate. In this paper, I would like to highlight four major areas that might be explored together with—never excluding—the imperialist framework that certainly enabled the rise and expansion of the field. These are: the importance of Christian and biblical archaeology; the role of the antiquities market in the expansion of European collections; the reception of finds and ideas about the ancient world in the wider European public; and the ‘on the ground’ relationship between local officials and residents on the one hand, and European archaeologists (of varying sorts) on the other. I would also like to call attention to the reality that there really can be no unified ‘history of archaeology’: the fields of Native American archaeology in the mid-twentieth century and classical archaeology in the early nineteenth century actually share almost nothing in common, and the same would also be true of Japanese excavations in western China in the early twentieth century. The upshot of the lecture is to ask how we can do justice to the imperialist aspects of certain chapters in this (disunified) story without letting a totalizing framework dominate our investigations.

Suzanne Marchand is LSU Systems Boyd (University) Professor of European Intellectual History at Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge. Marchand obtained her BA from UC Berkeley in 1984, and her Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in 1992. She served as assistant and then associate professor at Princeton University before moving to LSU in 1999. She is the author of Down from Olympus: Archaeology and Philhellenism in Germany, 1750-1870 (1996) and German Orientalism in the Age of Empire: Race, Religion, and Scholarship (2009), and most recently has combined cultural and economic history in Porcelain: A History from the Heart of Europe (2020). She is currently working on a history of Herodotus reception since 1700, tentatively titled: History and Lies: Herodotus and the Instabilities of Western Civilization.

Zum Gastvortrag ergeht herzliche Einladung